

The Regents of the University of California

ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

November 19, 2025

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee met on the above date at the UCLA Luskin Conference Center, Los Angeles campus.

Members present: Regents Anguiano, Batchlor, Brooks, Leib, Sarris, and Wang; Ex officio member Reilly; Advisory member Palazoglu; Chancellors Frenk, Gillman, and Larive; Former Staff Advisor Emiru

In attendance: Regents Analyst Sheridan, General Counsel Robinson, Provost Newman, and Recording Secretary Li

The meeting convened at 3:20 p.m. with Committee Chair Leib presiding.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of September 17, 2025 were approved, Regents Anguiano, Batchlor, Brooks, Leib, Reilly, Sarris, and Wang voting “aye.”¹

2. JOINT ACADEMIC SENATE-ADMINISTRATION TASK FORCE ON UC ADAPTATION TO DISRUPTIONS (UCAD PLUS)

[Background material was provided to Regents in advance of the meeting, and a copy is on file in the Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff.]

Provost Newman introduced an effort to examine how UC can be more effective by capitalizing on cooperation across the ten campuses, including the potential development of new research configurations. She emphasized that this was an Academic Senate-led effort and she was grateful for its leadership in engaging with the most difficult questions faced by higher education.

Faculty Representative Palazoglu explained that in spring 2025, in response to the turbulent landscape faced by the University, the Academic Senate convened a task force on UC Adaptation to Disruptions (UCAD). The task force was charged with exploring how to maintain UC’s teaching, research, and public service missions amid major disruptions to federal research support, international student visa regulations, financial aid, and other challenges. UCAD’s July 2025 interim report identified four initial priority areas focusing primarily on academic restructuring and workforce resizing, and emphasized the need for systemwide approaches to sustaining UC’s mission under stress.

¹ Roll call vote required by the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act [Government Code §11123(b)(1)(D)] for all meetings held by teleconference.

Recognizing that many solutions would require academic and administrative coordination across the ten campuses, UCAD Plus, a joint Senate-administrative task force, was established to develop actionable strategies that would then be reviewed systemwide. UCAD Plus was led by a steering committee co-chaired by Mr. Palazoglu, Ms. Newman, and UC Irvine Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Hal Stern. Its membership comprised all campus Executive Vice Chancellors and Provosts, all Senate divisional chairs and key systemwide Senate committee leaders, and campus administrators responsible for research, academic personnel, and graduate and undergraduate education.

Building upon UCAD's interim report and guided by the feedback received, the new joint task force would address both short- and long-term adaptation strategies in five areas: 1) research activities and infrastructure to ensure that the research mission remains strong amid changing federal funding; 2) academic personnel reviews and faculty advancement in light of disruptions to research funding; 3) academic program evaluations to sustain academic quality and financial viability; 4) instructional opportunities to maintain course availability by considering intercampus offerings utilizing in-person, hybrid, and fully online formats; and 5) the future of graduate education. The latter would draw upon insights from the Academic Planning Council's 2025 report on the future of doctoral education. Each of these areas would be addressed by a workgroup co-led by Senate and administration representatives. This structure ensured that any recommendations would reflect both the academic and operational dimensions of the charge.

Ms. Newman stated that UCAD Plus reflected shared governance and coordinated planning in a time of unprecedented uncertainty and financial stress which had implications for every aspect of the academic mission. The effort sought to answer a central question: how can the University of California remain resilient, innovative, and excellent in an era of extreme disruption? UCAD Plus workgroups were meeting regularly and would develop an initial set of recommendations by February 2026 for consideration by the full task force, followed by additional rounds of systemwide consultation and review. Its purpose was not to recommend specific actions but rather to develop a framework for subsequent action by imagining and identifying budget structures, organizational structures, and technological investments, if needed. The framework would be shared with the President, chancellors, and the Academic Council by summer 2026, with additional systemwide review in fall 2026. A final report with cost analyses would be presented in January 2027, and the Regents would be kept informed throughout the process. She remarked that while this effort was unusual, she was confident that with the steadfast engagement and approval of the faculty, it would develop new models to address longstanding problems and that UC would play a leadership role in reimagining higher education.

Ms. Newman highlighted that UCAD Plus was complemented by a parallel initiative co-led by Executive Vice Presidents Nava and Brostrom focused on administrative efficiencies, operational effectiveness, and aligning administrative operations with the academic restructuring recommendations of UCAD Plus. These efforts embodied UC's "power of ten," leveraging the collective strengths of the campuses to innovate, adapt, and support each other through change.

Mr. Stern emphasized the critical role of the campuses in addressing these challenges. Some campuses have established local UCAD structures and others were contributing their perspectives via participation on the five UCAD Plus workgroups. UCAD Plus provided an opportunity for the campuses to discuss ideas for change. These were not prescriptive, but rather options and tools that campuses could choose to employ. He noted that UC's excellence is based on the strength of shared governance and UCAD Plus illustrated this. Bringing together the best ideas from the faculty and administrators would help UC navigate this complexity while enabling the campuses to find their own way. This collaborative response would safeguard the University's mission and ensure that UC remains a source of discovery, educational opportunity, and service for the people of California.

Regent Wang praised the University's willingness to innovate suggested expanding the workgroups' scope to include the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education. While the emergence of AI was not related to federal action or funding, it was forcing change. A faculty perspective on how UC can use AI to innovate would be valuable. Ms. Newman replied that President Milliken is developing a systemwide approach to AI and noted that within the context of UCAD Plus, AI would be critical in two ways. First, it would accelerate efforts to provide cross-campus education through online courses. Second, AI would provide opportunities for administrative efficiency by performing routine tasks and leaving higher order work to staff.

Regent Sarris thanked the presenters for undertaking this endeavor. He appreciated that the timeline for this effort had been lengthened due to its scope. He asked if the Regents would approve a plan that included all of the areas discussed. Ms. Newman responded that she would continually update the Regents on UCAD Plus discussions but noted that while some elements would require Regents' action, others would provide an "architecture" or operational structure for implementing ideas. For example, the advancement of junior faculty has been impeded due to disruptions in research funding. The workgroup might recommend changes to the faculty review process that would be considered by the Academic Senate and would not require Regents' action to implement. Mr. Stern added that some workgroup recommendations could be implemented soon, while discussions of other elements would continue.

Regent Anguiano asked how the workgroups would approach cross-campus courses, given the differences between campuses on the semester and quarter systems. Mr. Palazoglu responded that the disruptions have only exacerbated an existing problem. This has been an ongoing issue for systemwide programs like UCDC and the UC Education Abroad Program, and recently when students faced visa revocations the University sought ways to help them graduate by enrolling in courses at other campuses. The workgroup charged with examining this problem would approach it holistically with the intention that addressing it could set the stage for online programs. The workgroup would discuss how to account for and transfer different credit units and how course content would be approved by different campuses. Mr. Stern added that there currently were systemwide online classes and that UCAD Plus would help facilitate such courses. It was also an impetus for the campuses to solve challenges such as language instruction. It could allow campuses to specialize in

certain languages which would benefit all campuses through cross-campus enrollment. Ms. Newman added that a joint faculty-administration committee recently produced a thorough report on the costs and considerations of adopting a common calendar.

Regent Reilly asked what the three greatest challenges were in this endeavor. Ms. Newman responded that the University was planning for a disruptive future, but it must plan the architecture for circumstances that were not fully known. There were many budgetary variables and possibilities. Drastic cuts to federal research indirect cost rates, the loss of many international students, and significant declines in grant funding could all have different effects. UCAD Plus aimed to maintain excellence by planning for various scenarios and collaborating across campuses. Mr. Palazoglu remarked that this was a huge effort that touched every part of the UC community. The University must ensure that the people affected by disruption were included in these conversations and contributed to the plans. He noted that Mr. Stern previously mentioned parallel structures created on the campuses. UCAD Plus was key to ensuring that the collective voice was heard through collaboration with the campus divisions of the Academic Senate and the administration. Mr. Stern added that UCAD Plus was addressing both short-term problems, like tenure for junior faculty, and longer-term trends. He highlighted a potential longer-term problem, namely, that research funding might never return to previous levels. A workgroup was examining how UC can maintain its primacy, for example, by sharing research infrastructure across campuses to save on expenditures. Ms. Newman recalled that once, faculty members had to physically be at the Keck telescope facility to do their work, but now can get access to the data on their computers. While this is not applicable to some areas of research, such as animal research, the University has not fully exploited what could be done to share core facilities because it had the grant support to do so on each campus.

Former Staff Advisor Emiru asked if UCAD Plus would include a staff representative. Ms. Newman noted that the parallel administrative effort focused on operational efficiency would require extensive staff input. Additionally, staff would be needed to facilitate intercampus activity, structures which did not currently exist. Planning for this would require significant staff involvement.

Chancellor Frenk commented that this exercise helped improve relationships between campus administrations and the divisions of the Academic Senate at a difficult time. He suggested that both the administrative and academic efforts make a distinction between measures requiring adaptation to unfavorable trends and changes that should be undertaken even absent a crisis. This was an opportunity to promote greater operational efficiency to save public resources. On the academic side, it presented an opportunity to cultivate a blended instructional model, which should be pursued regardless of financial challenges because it makes sense from a pedagogical point of view. Provost Newman commented that one should never waste a good crisis. For example, the University began discussing cross-campus language programs before the federal challenges emerged. Many language programs on a single campus had very low enrollment but were valuable; the challenge is how to make such programs financially sustainable. Technology makes this feasible, but the University did not currently have the budget or credit structures to make it happen. She reported that in January 2026, the University would launch instruction in ten languages for

students across the system. This was an opportunity for the University to think in more innovative ways. Mr. Stern agreed that many innovations that were not a direct response to the federal crisis were under consideration by the workgroups. Returning to the topic of AI, he noted that UC Irvine was providing funding for faculty proposals to use AI in large enrollment courses to create more personalized instruction.

Committee Chair Leib asked whether the working group would address credit for entrepreneurship and innovation in teaching. Ms. Newman replied that the substance of programs and courses was not part of this plan but making it easier for students to get credit for cross-campus courses would be addressed. She noted that the next phase of this enterprise would bring together deans and department chairs to discuss academic programs and sourcing courses across the system.

Committee Chair Leib asked when another update would be provided to the Regents. Ms. Newman said that a discussion item would be presented in either March or May 2026.

Committee Chair Leib invited Student Observer Teesha Sreeram to make remarks. Ms. Sreeram appreciated the comprehensive overview of UCAD Plus, which was critical for sustaining operations and institutional resilience at a time of rapid change. She noted that students are primary stakeholders and are directly affected by funding shifts and academic restructuring. As such, she urged that student voices be included in UCAD Plus and commented that it was vital to consult students at every stage. She also encouraged an analysis of the equity implications of any budgetary decisions. She noted recent cuts to equity and retention programs without meaningful consultation with students. At UCLA, for example, due to budgetary constraints, the Academic Advancement Program reduced staff and programs supporting underserved students. She also highlighted funding threats to graduate education and disability support programs and emphasized the imperative to consult with students and make permanent allocations for student support programs.

3. UCLA RESEARCH INFORMING POST-FIRE REBUILDING AND RESILIENCE

[Background material was provided to Regents in advance of the meeting, and a copy is on file in the Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff.]

Provost Newman stated that this presentation would highlight the important contributions of UCLA researchers in response to catastrophic wildfires in January 2025. Myriad impacts continued, including air and water pollution affecting communities, toxic contamination, economic losses for businesses and workers, and both physical and mental health effects on residents and first responders. California communities continued to brace for future wildfires. She posited that this context underscored the importance of research and the role of scientifically informed policy as Los Angeles considered how to rebuild in ways that reduce the risk of future fires being as destructive.

Professor Megan Mullin, Faculty Director of the Luskin Center for Innovation at the Luskin School of Public Affairs and principal investigator for UCLA's partnership with Los Angeles' Blue Ribbon Commission on Climate Action and Fire-Safe Recovery,

summarized the deaths, destruction, and economic and health impacts of the fires, including unknown excess mortality and illness resulting from contaminant exposure. She noted a range of real and perceived failures that crippled emergency response, contributed to loss of life, and undermined public trust in government, which had a continuing impact on recovery. Ms. Mullin displayed a chart of multiple UCLA research projects related to the complex tasks of recovery and rebuilding. This research brought expertise from across the campus to directly engage with fire-affected communities and key decision makers to address the many needs of these communities. Los Angeles County Supervisor Lindsey Horvath created the Blue Ribbon Commission of civic leaders and recruited UCLA to provide the Commission with evidence-based research and best practices and to develop policy recommendations for resilient rebuilding. UCLA drew on faculty expertise from campuses across the system and from UC Agriculture and Natural Resources Cooperative Extension. The scholarly network and a team of mostly undergraduate students wrote memos, provided guidance, and met with commissioner working groups so that their decisions were informed by the best available science. UCLA also led an extensive community engagement effort to address loss of trust in government and uncertainty about rebuilding. The Commission produced nearly 60 recommendations across a range of domains. Ms. Mullin provided the Regents with the first portion of the report containing these recommendations. The second portion of the report was a summary of research and community feedback and identified research gaps and areas where research did not easily translate to policy guidance.

Julia Stein, Deputy Director of the Emmett Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the UCLA School of Law, explained that the Commission sought both to recommend specific policies to prepare for future fires and encourage sustainable recovery, and to clearly explain how policies and practices would be funded and how government could help facilitate them. The recommendations had to balance three core goals of the recovery effort: speed, cost effectiveness, and resilience to future climate change disasters in order to build smartly and sustainably. UCLA's task was to understand what worked in response to past disasters and what needed to be changed so that the Commission's vision of recovery could be achieved. Public policy experts studied rebuilding efforts and responses to disasters nationwide. They found that secure funding and central coordination were key pieces of successful recovery efforts, and that community redevelopment agencies (CRAs) were effective vehicles to achieve this. However, CRAs were dissolved in California in the early 2010s. The Commission identified a need for an agency with both financing and coordinating power. State law already provided for Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts and Climate Recovery Districts to leverage the tax value of future improvements to fund recovery efforts. While financing tools existed, if local governments established redevelopment agencies, they would lack the authority under law to centrally manage recovery, i.e., they could not serve as a vehicle to buy and hold property, would not have design authority, and could not be a central coordinating hub, offering a single point of accountability. Informed by this research, the Commission proposed the creation of a Resilient Rebuilding Authority with powers to coordinate a fast, cost-efficient, sustainable recovery. A State Senate bill proposing this sparked debate and discussions were ongoing. In addition, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a

resolution to secure tax-increment financing for recovery. Finally, this research created interest in changing State law to allow localities to create disaster recovery structures.

Professor Michael Jerrett, Chair of the Fielding School of Public Health, stated that UCLA was filling a void left by federal agencies to supply credible public health guidance about the effects of climate change on health. He noted that this fire was unique in terms of the enormous number of structures burned, creating myriad toxic effects in a large, dense urban area. Approximately 9.5 million people were exposed to heavy smoke and another 11 million had moderate smoke exposure. It also contaminated the air, soil, and water of neighboring communities. He briefly described several research projects with a consortium of ten universities, including measuring volatile organic compounds and carcinogens to assess risk to the public and to ensure that homes were properly remediated during the recovery process. The consortium released data briefs prior to peer review to ensure that the public received critical information in a timely manner and provide an impetus for greater governmental monitoring. In addition, UCLA engaged in public service by training more than 400 workers on how to properly protect themselves while performing debris removal and remediation. Finally, he noted that UCLA created the UCLA Health Wildfire Registry, which has enrolled 4,500 people for consideration in future health studies. He hoped to find funding to perform a study of the long-term health impacts of the fire.

Regent Reilly commented that UCLA galvanized the community and played an important role in trying to mitigate the devastating effects of the fires. She asked how the incredible amount of research systemwide on the prevention, suppression, and aftermath of wildfires could be consolidated to make UC the source for information on wildfires. Ms. Newman responded that she hoped to present this body of research in Sacramento.

Regent Park was heartened to see that Regent Emerita Estolano was involved in this research and was continuing to make an impact. She commented that the discussion of rebuilding the workforce focused on technical jobs. But successful rebuilding not only requires technical skills, but also communication skills, change management, community engagement, and policy advancement. Without these, rebuilding can fail. Ms. Mullin replied that framing the workforce discussion in this way was helpful. Community-based organizations are an important hub of activity and catalyst in rebuilding efforts. UCLA connected with these organizations and the report recognized that building community centers and restoring local business was critical to a full recovery. These priorities were reflected in other parts of the report, but not in the workforce development sections. She thanked Regent Park for making this connection.

Regent Anguiano applauded these efforts and remarked that they demonstrated the real-world impact of UC research on the people of California. Committee Chair Leib concurred.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Attest:

Secretary and Chief of Staff